

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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O R 262230Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4576

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

USMISSION GENEVA

S E C R E T ATHENS 5099

EXDIS

GENEVA FOR BUFFUM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GR

SUBJECT: CYPRUS: CONVERSATION WITH DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF

1. AT MY INITIATIVE I CALLED THIS EVENING ON DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF. I TOOK OCCASION TO CONVEY UNDER SECRETARY SISCO'S WARM REGARDS FOR WHICH HE EXPRESSED THANKS.

2. WE BEGAN OUR CONVERSATION BY DISCUSSING SITUATION ON CYPRUS. AVEROFF TOLD ME THAT IF TURKS CONTINUED TO SEND IN TROOPS GREEK MILITARY WISHED TO RESPOND BY DONG SAME, BUT HE WAS NOT IN AGREEMENT. I TOLD HIM WE WERE DOING EVERYTHING WE COULD TO MAKE CEASE-FIRE EFFECTIVE AND WOULD CONTINUE THESE EFFORTS. I DESCRIBED GENERALLY MY MEETING EARLY TODAY WITH KARAMANLIS, STRESSING NEED FOR FLEXIBILITY AT GENEVA AND DANGEROUS INTERNAL SITUATION THAT COULD EVOLVE ON ISLAND IF MAKARIOS PUSHED TO FOREFRONT. AVEROFF AGREED AND HAD TOLD CYPRIOT AMBASSADOR HERE EXACTLY THE SAME THING. IN FACT, AVEROFF APPEARED TO AGREED WITH OUR VIEWS ON MAKARIOS.

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3. AVEROFF EXPRESSED GENERAL CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE

TROOP MOVEMENTS ON BULGARIAN AND RUMANIAN FRONTIERS, OBSERVING THAT ALTHOUGH GOG SURE THAT FRONTIER TROOPS HAD BEEN REENFORCED, GREECE HAD NO MEANS OF EVALUATING SITUATION AND DID NOT KNOW WHAT TROOP MOVEMENTS MIGHT BE OCCURRING FURTHER BACK. HE WAS FEARFUL, HOWEVER, THAT THERE COULD BE SOVIET-DIRECTED COUNTER MOVES AGAINST GREECE IN THE EVENT OF GREEK-TURKISH HOSTILITIES. HE THOUGHT THAT IF GREECE AND TURKEY FOUGHT, THERE WOULD BE WIDER WAR WITHIN 24 HOURS, INCLUDING PROSPECT OF SOVIET INTERVENTION TO SUPPORT BULGARIAN MOVE TO SEA. EVEN IF RESULT WAS NATO-WARSAW PACT CONFRONTATION, EVENTS COULD OCCUR SO QUICKLY THAT NATO MIGHT BE CONFRONTED WITH A FAIT-ACCOMPLI FORESTALLING EFFECTIVE REACTION. I SAID I THOUGHT THIS SCENARIO QUITE EXAGGERATED AND IN FACT UN-REALISTIC.

4. TURNING TO TURKEY WE EXPLORED GOT OBJECTIVES. HE EXPRESSED VIEW PM ECEVIT WAS TO CONSIDERABLE EXTENT, SUBSERVIENT TO TURKISH MILITARY AND GAVE TWO EXPLANATIONS FOR PRESENT TURKISH MILITARY INTERVENTION; EITHER GENUINE CONCERN FOR TURKISH SECURITY OR NATIONALIST MOTIVATIONS. HE RECOGNIZED FULLY THAT GREEK INITIATION OF CRISIS IN CYPRUS HAD BEEN STUPID AND THAT IT HAD TURNED WORLD OPINION AGAINST GREECE. HOWEVER, ADVENT OF NEW GREEK GOVERNMENT AND TURKISH MILITARY INTERVENTION HAD TURNED SITUATION AGAINST TURKS AND CONTINUING CRISIS ON ISLAND, INCLUDING PROBLEMS RELATIVE TO MAKING CEASE-FIRE EFFECTIVE, WERE WORKING TO ADVANTAGE OF NEW GREEK GOVERNMENT IN WITHSTANDING PRESSURE FROM HOTHEADS AMONG GREEK MILITARY.

5. I ASKED AVEROFF HOW RELATIONSHIPS OF KARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT WITH THE MILITARY WERE WORKING. HE SAID THEY WERE COMPLICATED. FOR TIME BEING, AVEROFF SAID, HE WAS NO MORE THAN "FIGUREHEAD" IN MOD BUT HE PLANNED TO CHANGE THAT SITUATION TOMORROW BY NEW LAW SO THAT HE WOULD SIGN ALL TRANSFERS FROM CAPTAIN AND UP AND ALSO WOULD BECOME CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL COSIDERNG PROMOTIONS FROM BRIG. GENERAL. (AT 8:15 P.. GREEK RADIO ANNOUNCED THAT PM TOMORROW CHAIRING MEETING INCLUDING GEN. BONANOS, SHAF, MIN. OF PUBLIC ORDER

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GHIKAS, DEFENSE MIN. AVEROFF, AND CHIEFS OF THREE MILITARY SERVICES TO EXAMINE MILITARY CONDITION OF NATION. BROADCAST ALSO STATED THAT BY EXECUTIVE DECREE ESA REDUCED TO STRICTLY MILITARY DUTIES AND ANY OTHER FUNCTIONS IT EARLIER HAD BEEN GIVEN HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN.)

6. AS TO GENERAL IOANNIDES, AVEROFF HAS TO ISSUE A PUBLIC STATEMENT INDICATING HE WAS STILL ON DUTY BECAUSE OTHER

MILITARY CHIEFS WOULD NOT HAVE IT OTHERWISE. IOANNIDES' CLOSEST ASSOCIATE WAS GENERAL GALATSANOS, A STRONG SUPPORTER. IOANNIDES MET WITH HIM TWICE YESTERDAY. AVEROFF SAID IOANNIDES HAS SOME 20 "VERY TOUGH" MILITARY FOLLOWERS. THEY CLEARLY WERE NOT HAPPY WITH LIBERALIZATION. HE FEARED WHAT EFFECT OF IMMINENT RETURN OF ANDREAS PAPANDREOU MIGHT BE.

7. AVEROFF IS KEENLY AWARE OF CONTINUING THREAT FROM IOANNIDES AND IS CLEARLY PLAYING CAUTIOUS AND WARY GAME. HE IS AWARE THAT IOANNIDES AND "HIS BOYS" ARE TOUGH ADVERSARIES BUT SEEMED REASONABLY OPTIMISTIC THAT WITH A LITTLE TIME PROPER BALANCE COULD BE ACHIEVED BY EVENTUALLY ARRANGING IOANNIDES' TRANSFER TO EPIRUS, HIS RESIGNATION, OR PLACING HIM ON LEAVE. BUT THIS ALL CONJECTURAL. KARAMANLIS, ON THE OTHER HAND, WANTED AN IMMEDIATE SHOWDOWN AND AVEROFF THOUGHT THIS MIGHT COME TOMORROW. PESMAZOGLOU, MANGAKIS AND OTHERS PARTICIPATING IN THE GOVERNMENT IN FACT HAD BEEN MOST RELUCTANT TO JOIN UNLESS THE IOANNIDES ISSUE DISPOSED OF. AVEROFF HAD MADE CLEAR TO HARDLINERS THAT AN ATTEMPT AT REVERSAL COULD BE BLOODY. HE THOUGHT THE ISSUE WOULD BE DECIDED IN ATHENS AND GAVE NO CREDENCE TO REPORTS OF OPPOSITION TO IOANNIDES IN THE UNITS IN THE NORTH.

8. HE GAVE ME GENERAL FILL-IN ON HOW NEW GOVERNMENT HAD COME INTO BEING (SEPTEL TO FOLLOW). IT HAD SHOWN GREATER STRENGTH THAT HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED AS ILLUSTRATED BY POPULAR RECEPTION GIVEN KARAMANLIS AND BREADTH OF GOVERNMENT, WHICH, ALTHOUGH IRRITATING SOME ELEMENTS IN MILITARY BECAUSE OF INCLUDING OF INDIVIDUALS SUCH AS PESMAZOGLOU, ASSURED IT WIDER SUPPORT.

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9. AVEROFF WOULD WELCOME ANY APPROPRIATE SUPPORT WE COULD GIVE KARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT. MY SUGGESTIONS CONTAINED IN SEPARATE MESSAGE.
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